



Feb 14

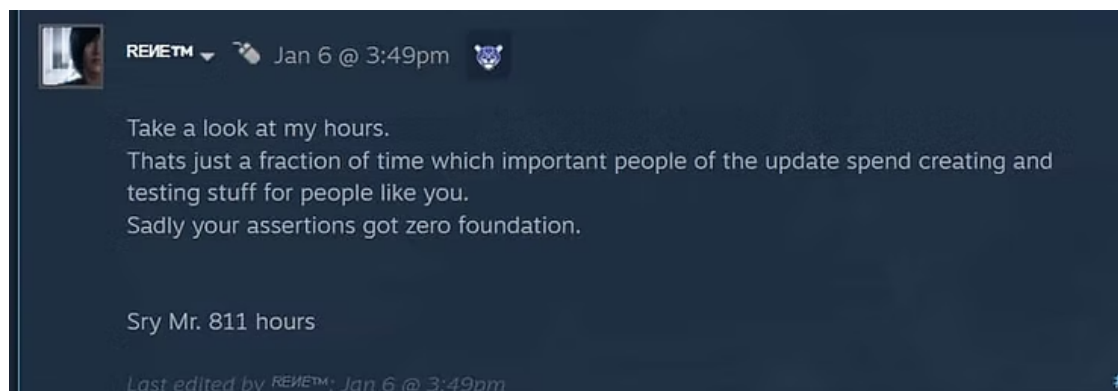
## L4D2 - Reflections on the Last Stand



Today I want to talk about something. Perhaps... *engage* upon it with the Left 4 Dead community.

Let's talk about The Last Stand update - one of the biggest updates in this game's history in quite some time. Probably the only update it'll be getting in a while - though here's hoping Valve has something up their sleeve for the 25th anniversary. Look, Left 4 Dead is one of my most favorite games... probably of all time. I've spent a lot of hours on it, seen a few... epic funny moments now and then... but something has recently irked me. Far more than it should... and it's about the Last Stand update.

Now, you're probably wondering what's happened recently that's got me suddenly irked over an update that happened five years ago. Well, first and foremost... I want to talk about THIS comment.



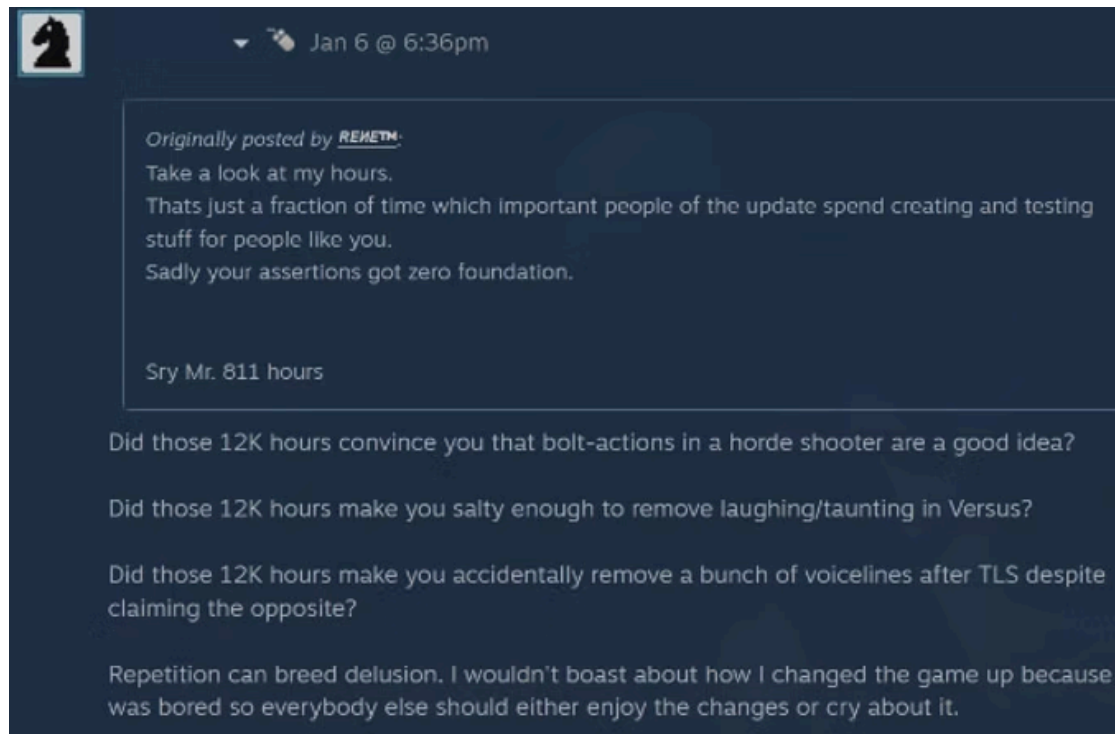
This is a post by a member of the Last Stand update team. For the full context...



Now, I don't know about you, but to me this response came across as a little... dickish? Arrogant? Yes, the OP's post isn't much better, but... using your hours as an argument? Really?

800 hours is a considerable amount - it's not veteran status by any means but I doubt this is someone who entirely sucks at the game. A better response would've been "What exactly is this 'untested shit' that you're referring to?" and go from there, or just don't respond at all.

But since he chose the snarky path, I responded with equal measure.



Just because you and some others have put a whole bunch of hours into this thing doesn't mean it's the perfect update for everybody. I'll elaborate more on the whole "repetition breeds delusion" bit later.

I have since deleted the reply because I felt it was a bit harsh, but I wish I hadn't. I stand by it.

With RENE here having... you know... twelve thousand hours and proudly boasting... you'd think they'd have at least a *word* to say in response to all this, but no.

He just blocked me. No explanation. No retort. Just an instant block.

Now before you say anything. I know this looks like petty forum drama - I assure you it's not. And it's not solely a matter of some random person on the internet blocking me. God forbid, I could care less about this person.

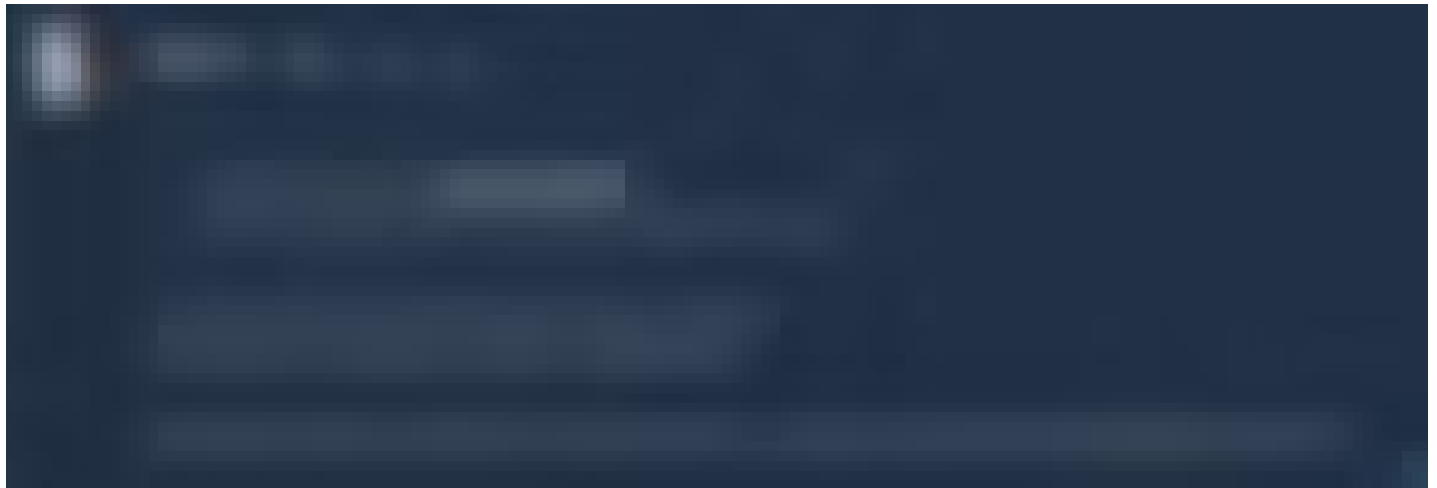
But you see... that's the whole problem, I DON'T care about this person. And yet, this person... alongside many others I don't care for... made changes to a game that I and thousands of others love... because... why?

I mean, look at this. "FOR people like you?" Really? I'm sorry... but who wanted you to begin with? Who is this guy? Who gave you the right!? Who gave any of these so-called "Last Stand" members the right?

Well, I don't know. And that's the whole point of this document, I don't know who these people are. We've all been gaslit into believing this was a quote-unquote "community update"... but if you've played Left 4 Dead... were you asked? Was noskillch? Khomchik? NasCoz? I have four thousand hours, why wasn't I polled on whether or not I wanted shitty bolt actions in my beloved horde shooter?

Who out there was asked about these changes? Specifically anyone capable of arguing about balancing decisions. RENE clearly isn't, so... why did he get to contribute? Why did any of the TLS members?

Nobody knows. It's just this random bubble of quote-unquote elites who got lucky enough to cozy up with Valve to make changes on behalf of thousands of players. They'd rather just block you instead of engaging in discussion. Cronyism is the only reason a person like this gets a say on behalf of the whole community.



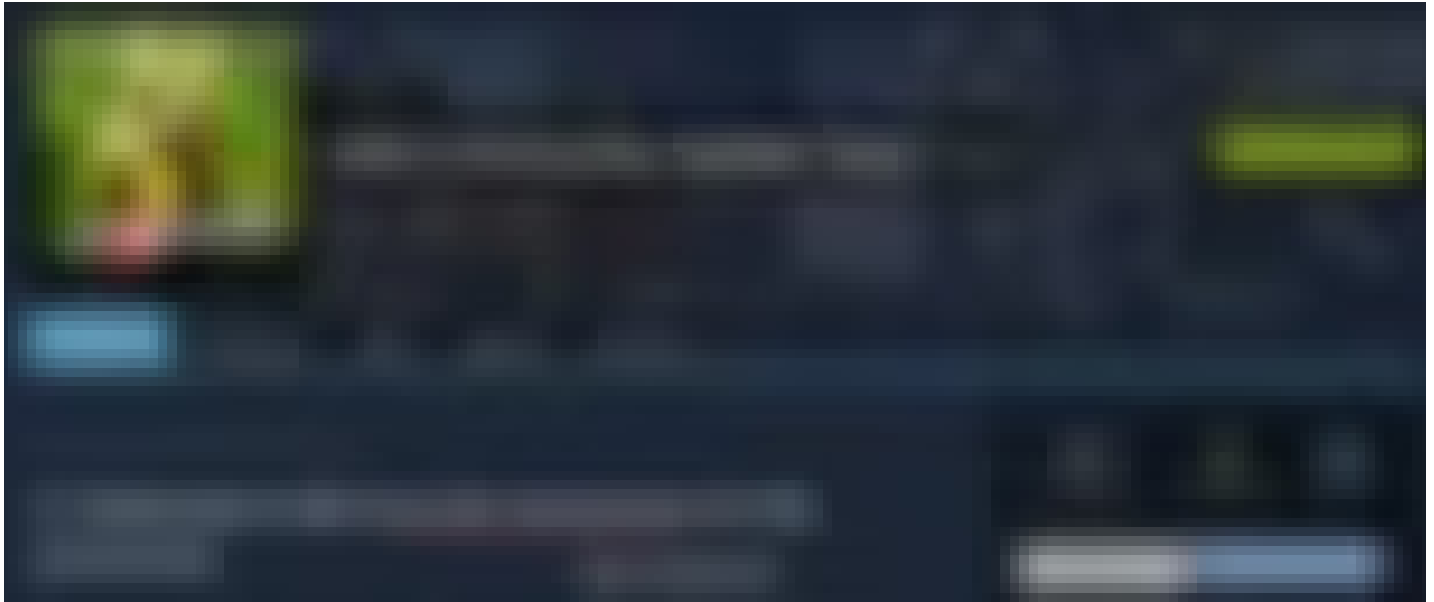
I have met far, *far* more players who know a lot more about this game than he, as much as he likes to think the opposite, and trust me, they *do not* like the idea behind Last Stand just as much as I do. They don't fall for the impression this gang tries to push.

Let me make something clear-... don't take this as "oh, boohoo, someone changed up my game". Look I get it, it happens, the game changes. Your favorite meta suddenly gets removed or shifted around a little. This is fine. Maybe it's mildly disappointing sometimes, but it's usually for the greater good. Usually.

And that's usually because you know it's in the hands of the developers who... you know... know a thing or two about game design philosophy... or at least, you hope they do. (not always)

My objection lies in entrusting that power to individuals whose qualifications and understanding of game design are completely unknown. I'll elaborate on that in a moment.

Yes, Valve quote-unquote “oversaw” the TLS project but if you know anything about Valve, Left 4 Dead isn’t exactly on the top of their priority list, so you can’t entirely trust that they were extensively practicing game design philosophy when supervising this. What, it’s like 64 people PLUS one or two developers? That’s just mob rule.



I feel this is why we had stranger choices being made. A bolt action? In a horde shooter? Really? And why does this replace the tier 2 snipers!? A tier 1 shouldn’t be able to outperform a tier 2 - save for \*maybe\* the chrome shotgun but that’s only because the rate of fire can be abused by shoving.

I’d rather just take an SMG, or nothing at all. That’s why Valve made it so weapons are randomized and sometimes don’t even spawn at all in certain sections. Now you have bots picking these things up and it makes them useless. Some noobs will pick it up and think they can one-shot things like it’s Counter-Strike.

You see how the balance has nonsensically shifted now?

As the saying goes, just because you can, doesn’t mean you should. It’s like replacing something vanilla with something from the beta because... I don’t know... it’s been “restored” or whatever, without realizing what you’re sacrificing in addition and not taking into consideration why it might’ve not been fully realized to begin with.

That’s what happened with some of the voice lines that I was talking about earlier. They were so eager to change Louis’ voiceline script, they left out a bunch of others. If you want an example of a modified talker addon that does it right, by combining the two, then get this.

<https://steamcommunity.com/sharedfiles/filedetails/?id=2962064149>

And I know this is such an oddly specific nitpick of all things, but for God’s sake, I don’t have twelve thousand hours and even I noticed this; so this thing about how many hours you spent on the project means nothing when you’re missing shit like this.

But that’s only a small gripe about TLS, at least that I have, and I know that some \*must\* share the same sentiment because I don’t see anyone jumping for joy when they come across the AWP or Steyr Scout.

Let me be clear - I don’t hate much of what The Last Stand did. In fact I rather enjoyed much of the fixes. The campaign was on par if not less replayable than Cold Stream, though. I mean it could’ve been any of the probably hundreds of other community campaigns in the workshop that are actually good, but I digress.

I recall survivors having that goofy looking penguin walk whenever they used the military rifle, and Zoey T-Posing most of the time when using melee weapons. And having the Left 4 Dead 1 infected restored in Left 4 Dead 1 maps is nothing short of a welcome addition.

But with that said, let’s go back a bit. So TLS isn’t flawless, and if it isn’t flawless, there is one possible fix for it: **criticism!**

There's an old saying that goes, "apes together strong". And it's no joke, man. A few men can't build a cathedral, and game design is much like a cathedral: an amalgamation of several arts harmonized together.

Therefore a small bubble of 64 people isn't going to effortlessly renovate Left 4 Dead, not without some sort of external correction.

I feel like if you're going to make major changes to the game on behalf of thousands of players, you should probably have at least somewhat of an ability to engage with, explain, and reason with the community at large. It's understandable when you have someone saying "this update is shit" with no further elaboration, but in my case, I gave four good points worthy of discussion, but RENE instantly resorts to the block button. It's not only childish to me, but also puts into question just how much solid reasoning went into the update at all.

When one of your members is instantly resorting to the block button at the sight of criticism, it heavily implies, at least to me, that the update is built upon the whims of the personal feelings of people with fragile egos.

I can't say I'm entirely comfortable with Valve letting people like this take the reigns. No one in their right mind should be.

As I said previously, in my deleted comment: I wouldn't boast about how I changed the game because I was bored - or to add to that, because I know what's best because I have more hours than they.

I would know because I'm guilty of it myself.

Back when I used to play Payday 2, I'd mod my game by mainly changing enemy spawns and behaviors. People who joined my game would complain about the changes then leave. I thought to myself, "well they're just idiots! I've fine tuned my game to perfection. Stick to your boring vanilla."

That was until I realized I'm the same way. I can't stand joining modded games in Left 4 Dead.

Those people weren't idiots. They just wanted the vanilla experience, and that's fine. The difference between me and the Last Stand though is that I gave people a choice. They could just leave.

But according to people like Rene, you have no choice. You have no say on the matter. You have to accept it, because we have more hours than you and we know what's best! It's totally not us who needs to change, with our thousands of hours - it's you, the noob that hasn't looked into every nook and cranny of the game's functions, still experiencing its magic.

Repetition breeds delusion.

Anyways, it is what it is at the end of the day. I'm not looking to change the Last Stand. Hell, I never had any say on it to begin with. Nobody did, except this inner circle. I don't expect everybody in the TLS team to be perfect, and I'm sure RENE had far less influence in the Last Stand team than I'm giving him credit for... but if you're associating with the group, and you discuss or even act in bad faith in discussions regarding the update, that is reflected on your group as a whole.

The implication is the group is either a loose collection of individuals with no cohesion, or it's a unified group that tolerates bad behavior, and both possibilities are pretty grim. Not the kind of people I'd want making near-permanent changes to a game I love without my consent. Nobody in their right mind should tolerate it.

Let this document serve as a lesson: be wary of self-appointed community ambassadors.

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